whole Earth newsletter

United Church Board for World Ministries Summer 1997, Vol. XXVII, No. 1

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Two to receive Synod awards

Two UCC missionaries, one active and one retired, will be honored at General Synod XXI in Columbus, OH, in July. Barbara de Souza will be one of two recipients of the Antoinette Brown Award, and Pauline King will receive one of the honored laywomen awards from CCW.

Barbara de Souza

Pauline King

De Souza is currently serving in Brazil in a ministry of health care and empowering women in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. King's work at the Family Village Farm in India has come to be known by thousands through the UCBWM Child Sponsorship Program.

In a culture beset by grinding poverty, governmental corruption and a failing health system, Barbara, a nurse and ordained UCC minister, teaches poor women to become health care educators in their own communities. In her training she uses a health manual/training workbook she wrote. She also wrote an earlier book, *Health Educators: An Experience With Women,* which documents her teaching methodologies. She has worked in Brazilian slums since the 1960's.

In addition to health training, Barbara started a free community pharmacy and health education center which is run by women she has trained. In Brazil, over half the population has high blood pressure, and

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Nineteen approved for overseas service

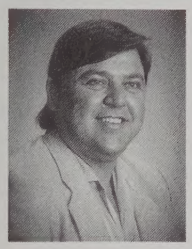
Nineteen persons were appointed to serve in nine overseas locations at the April meeting of the Common Global Ministries Board in April held in Indianapolis.

Ecumenical partners overseas invited personnel from the Global Ministries of the UCC and the Disciples to ministries in development and social outreach, art, theological education and public health consultancy in southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East. Four of the 19 are new appointees, two will go to new assignments in a different country and 13 are returnees.

Martha and Nathan Knoll, who previously served six years in India and two years in Sri Lanka before going to Thailand in 1988, will return to India Sept. 1 for a three-year term with the Kodaikanal International School where they served in 1984-85. There they will work and teach in the school's development and social outreach program.

The Knolls grew up and met in India where they served together before doing public health work in Sri Lanka. In

Martha Knoll



Nathan Knoll

Thailand they were involved in development at Payap University where they worked with a team to stem urban migration flow by setting up programs to encourage rural folk to stay and preserve their cultural heritage. To continue that would have meant taking jobs from the Thai, Nathan said. They plan to introduce the Kodaikanal students to rural development projects and help them develop a school-to-community relationship.

Southern Asia executive Eric Gass said Kodaikanal (established in 1901 by the UCBWM predecessor the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as a school for missionary children) evolved into a

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Boards ponder strategy, human rights

Strategic planning and human rights claimed major attention at the April Common Global Ministries Board meeting held in Indianapolis. Barbara Kershner Daniel, who chairs the Strategic Planning Design Team, reported on progress and noted the team sought input from a broad range of constituencies regarding CGMB priorities and goals.

Meeting just prior to the CGMB, the UCBWM Board of Directors provisionally approved the amendments to the UCC Constitution as proposed by the restructure committee and OK'd a resolution of partnership with the Congregational Church of American Samoa, which will go to General Synod XXI. The same action was taken by the UC Board for Homeland Ministries.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee offered three directions which addressed the Board's Guiding Principles, and which

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Feeling the children's pain

By Lourdes Garcia

I recently traveled to Jerusalem to visit a UCBWM Child Sponsorship site called the Rawdat El-Zuhur school, and to meet the children we sponsor. One of them, Yussef, described for us the violence he witnessed and participated in several years ago during a confrontation with the Israeli Army. During his narration, this 11-year-old Palestinian boy from a refugee camp demonstrated how members of his family and neighbors were beaten, handcuffed and arrested by the Army, and how he threw a rock. His straightforward account of an all-too-familiar occurrence broke my heart.

Yussef's story reminded me of another one told many years ago by a 9-year-old Nicaraguan boy, who described a "contra" attack on his village. He told of atrocities no child should ever see—his transformation from a child into a grim "hombrecito" (a little man) already taking place. These stories reflect some of the realities faced by children in nations and communities shattered by prolonged and violent economic, political and social injustice. In the U.S. also, increasing numbers of children face domestic and street violence as a result of unrelenting poverty, racism and growing social alienation.

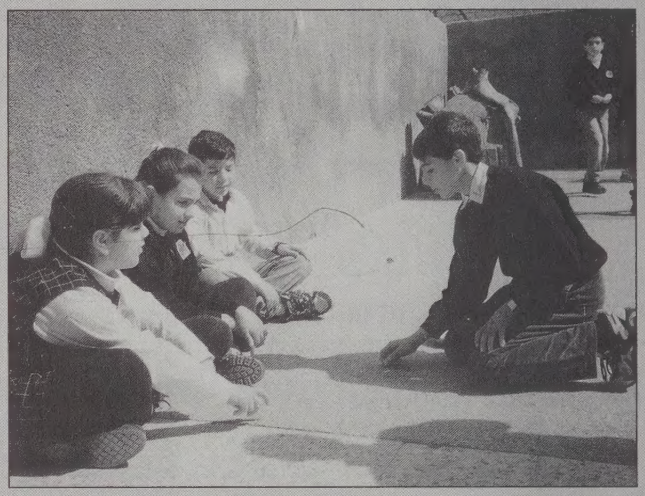
Two days after listening to Yussef's story, the principal of Rawdat El-Zuhur and I spoke about the long-term effects of violence, poverty and despair on Palestinian children. It isn't limited to children picking up stones to throw at heavily armed soldiers. We talked about the link between the continuous violence and poverty experienced by Palestinians in Israel and the subsequent increase in domestic violence in Palestinian homes. We spoke about a teacher visiting the home of a child who had shown up with bruises inflicted by a humiliated, raging, unemployed father. We spoke about the growing need for counseling and conflict resolution for families and whole communities, and the lack of resources.

Have you ever observed very young children when they encounter someone who looks different? Some ask questions. Some stare, run away or cry. Others come closer and shyly touch. They neither pretend to know nor immediately (falsely) accept the other. Perhaps it's time to ask questions of, look closely at, stop running away from, and feel the pain of the children. We need to stop pretending, actively acknowledge and learn about the things we fear.

Violence will not disappear if economic and social injustice, here and around the world, go unchallenged.

Garcia, the UCBWM Child Sponsorship Administrator, will be one of several speakers during the UCBWM's International Dinner at General Synod XXI in Columbus, OH, July 6, which will celebrate the lives of Palestinian youth—the "children of the stones."

Further information about the UCC's Child Sponsorship Program is available from Garcia at 475 Riverside Drive, 16th Fl., New York, NY 10115-0109; phone 212/870-2479; email <garcial@ucc.org>.



Rawdat El-Zuhur students at play

Awards *(continued from page 1)*

the lack of sex education—fed by machismo censure—results in high numbers of children aborted, abandoned, living on the street and sold into prostitution and slavery. She also helped start a center to work with young prostitutes and street children.

Dr. King served in India from 1954-88 and taught community health nursing at Vellore Christian Medical College Hospital, India, where she was exposed to the suffering of destitute and orphaned children. Her decision to keep a tiny baby girl deposited on her doorstep resulted in her taking in 15 more homeless children over the years and dreaming of a place where people who had no support could live together and provide homes for orphaned and semi-orphaned children.

Today over 150 children reside in small individual cottages at Family Village Farm, each with a needy, widowed cottage-mother and one or two needy elderly persons acting as grandparents. A board of 25 Indians oversees the growth and work at the site—which includes 25 agricultural acres to take care of the youngsters' nutritional needs and provides opportunities for training in agricultural and allied vocations.

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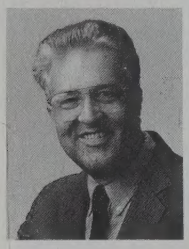
Around the Region: Africa

From Congo (former Zaire): a legacy of silence

By Dan Hoffman, Area Executive, Africa Office



A colleague recently asked me, "What is the news our partners in Zaire are sending us about the crisis?" Perhaps it is a measure of the confusion related to the fast-paced military and political developments in what is now called Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo, formerly Zaire) that I had to answer, "We have received no news from the churches."

There have been bits and pieces of information we have intercepted on the Internet: students and faculty of the Protestant University of Kinshasa evacuating the campus due to fear of being caught in fighting between two nearby military camps; a Disciples pastor in the equatorial rain forests murdered by roaming Rwandese Hutu militia groups, who also cut off the hands of a parishioner for good measure; the graduation of the International School of Evangelization in Kinshasa moved up 30 days so the campus can be emptied before the long-dreaded siege of the capital; takeover by the fighters of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire of Mbandaka, where 650,000 Disciples have their headquarters; a visit by heads of churches (but which churches?) to ailing President Mobutu appealing for a peaceful transition; the rumor that the Protestant University of the Great Lakes in North Kivu had its course on Christian ethics closed by the rebels and replaced by a course on "ideology of the armed alliance." Still, what do all these tidbits amount to?

About two months ago the Africa Office asked the Church of Christ in Zaire (the Protestant and Orthodox ecumenical umbrella organization) and the Disciples of Christ in Zaire for their understanding of what is going on. Remembering how our South African partners were so careful to give guidance during the anti-apartheid struggle, we thought there would be an important word to be pronounced by our partners on this moment in the Congo's tortured history. We are still waiting for a reply.

A UCC graduate student at the University of Chicago Divinity School wrote us, "Have the Zairian churches made a pronouncement like the Kairos Document of the South African churches during the apartheid years?" No, we replied, nothing yet.

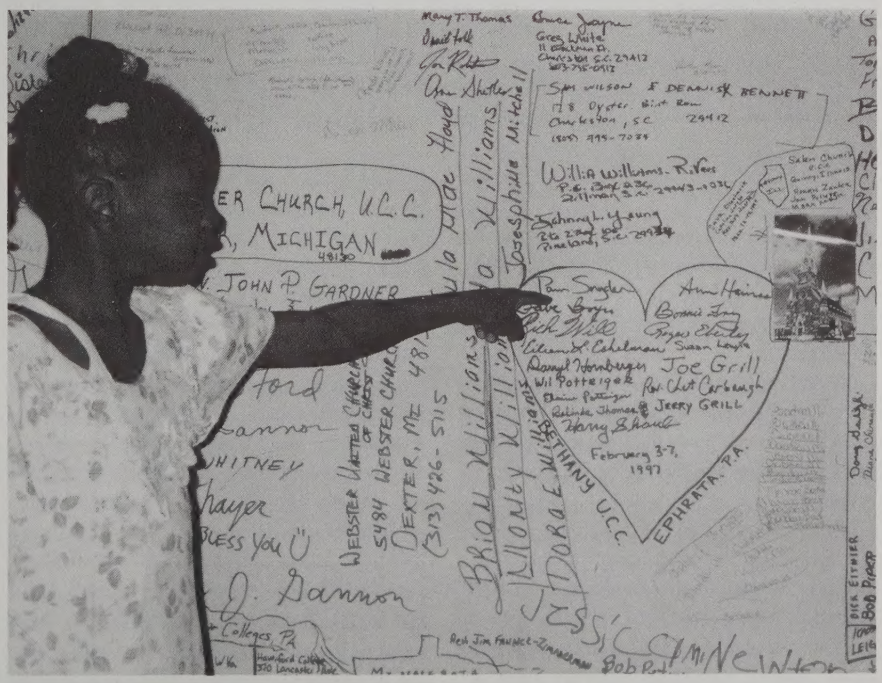
What does this silence mean? Does it reflect the rapid events and mutating political and military situation? How can you say anything when everything you say today is old news tomorrow? Does it reflect fear that what might be said today will be held against one when there is a change of leadership tomorrow? Does it mean that the Congo Protestant churches—founded largely in Victorian times by missionaries concerned mostly with individual salvation—have not found a prophetic voice, and are too confused to find it just now?

For our part, I wonder why we would criticize the silence of our partners? After all, during most of the 32 years of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko's cruel rule, North American Christians looked away from the evident political questions related to the Congo. In 1983 the National Council of Churches' Africa Office did attempt to convene a consultation on the need to do all possible to oppose Mobutu. But when the country's church delegates, themselves close to Mobutu, expressed discomfort, the advocacy effort quickly disintegrated. Every North American church involved in what was then Zaire celebrated the vibrant liturgical life and spiraling church growth of its partner, while neglecting to speak loudly and clearly about how the U.S. government—during the entire cold war—effectively propped up Mobutu. May we in good conscience now criticize the silence of our Congolese brothers and sisters?

Today I wait for the afternoon mail. Maybe there will be news from our partners. As my mother used to say, even a postcard will tell me that things are okay. I keep thinking of my friends: Dr. Bouto, a French-trained physician who returned to help his country; Rev. Boetsa, an evangelist in the forests where Hutu refugees now wander; Mrs. Elonda, a regal and imposing women's leader of the Disciples. What are they thinking? But I doubt that even a postcard will arrive.

In the midst of the silence we are left with prayer as our instrument of solidarity and presence. And in our prayers we may wish to insert a confession for the world church's 32-year silence, which has contributed to the unending crisis we witness today.

It is too bad we lost the opportunity to speak while there was still time.



THANKFUL THANKFUL — A youngster at First Thankful Baptist Church in Estill, SC, points to a symbol with lots of meaning to its congregants—burned out of their building in February 1996. The heart is part of the memories posted on a bulletin board which was signed by all volunteers, including UCC crews, who helped resurrect the small rural church from the ashes. It was gratitude and standing room only when members marched into the new facility on April 6. *(Staff photo by Linda Petrucelli)*

A call to the localization of mission

By Godwin Hlatshwayo, Global Ministries Missionary-in-Residence

In this article Godwin Hlatshwayo offers his views about how overseas partners perceive the localization of mission. The paper was presented in response to the localization conversation ongoing within the Common Global Ministries Board.

Yuri Gagarin, the Russian cosmonaut, went up into space, had a bird's-eye view of the globe, and remarked, "Looking at the earth from afar, you realize it is too small for conflict and just big enough for cooperation."

The simple principle "Think globally and act locally" is, for me, one of the most profound action statements to influence global education since the end of World War II. It was a message of local citizenry, a call for cooperation, and a global ethic for being each other's keepers. We understood that our actions have consequences which are felt far beyond the local environment. The ethic was to teach that our consumption and actions affect peoples and lands beyond our immediate geography. Thus it was a call for responsibility and compassionate love. The church was at the cutting edge of affirmative local expression and global connections.

Thirty years ago Africa started to remove the shackles of colonialism. But then came the principle of "the globalization of the marketplace." Now the "globalized" are supposed to lose their local identities, adopt borrowed names, eat the same soup and speak the same language prescribed by the all powerful. What is the difference between the global marketplace and the global church?

Partner churches are calling for the localization of mission as a reaction to combat the globalization horse that gallops over and trashes local cultures, economies and faiths. This is also an indictment to the global church, which has relied on the models of the marketplace to develop relationships with other faith communities overseas.

I view localization of mission as a call for a principle of "local authenticity and global solidarity." In this model we shall recognize authentic witness within each culture.

I view localization of mission as a call for a principle of "local authenticity and global solidarity." In this model we shall recognize authentic witness within each culture. The Gospel enjoys multiple expressions. The local community is the anchor of life, and our global connections should enable—not overwhelm—the expression of local integrity.

Partner churches emphasize the primacy of the local to help recover their relational strengths among the grassroots, youth, women, the laity and the larger community. Localization of mission in partner churches should be viewed as an approach to local leadership development, self-reliance and local capacity building. The global church has a role to accompany with respect, as partner churches envision how to sing their own song and express the good news story with their own voices. Arrogance and impatience are our enemies. The battle of the 21st century will be about global power versus local integrity.

What educational models have you developed that have staying power to create common ground between the local and national settings of the church in North America as you encounter overseas partners? What can you learn from the overseas localization arguments that can inform localization debates taking place in the U.S. and Canada? Perhaps your partners may help provide insight!

Board actions

(continued from page 1)

provided the basis for small group discussion and response. The strategic directions were—converting economics to the service of God, building mutual human community, and faith development.

Members also gave feedback on locations of UCBWM offices as well as patterns of CGMB leadership. A plan for action will be brought before the CGMB at its November meeting.

Staff presented an information session on the upcoming 50th anniversary of the United Nations' Human Rights Declaration in 1998. Members learned that the U.S. is in violation of the declaration, specifically regarding recent welfare reform legislation.

Reflections on the story of the Good Samaritan were presented by Salvador Martinez, International Associate missionary from the Philippines serving at McGilvary Theological Seminary, Thailand. Small groups reflected on the following questions—Who are the robbers, and what is robbing us; what are the fears that tempt us to walk away; what are the resources we bring to those lying on the roadside; and how can we best be neighbors.

The UCBWM Board of Directors voted to recommend that the Corporation, at its fall meeting, approve amendments to the UCC Constitution as proposed to General Synod XXI— as long as there is no substantive change, and also contingent upon the following: 1) that the amendments include explicit language providing establishment and maintenance of treasuries in each of the covenanted (national) ministries; 2) that other amendments to UCC bylaws, the revised charters and bylaws for the proposed covenanted ministries, and the design, staffing, timeline and funding of the ministries are mutually negotiated and approved by all parties including the UCBWM; and 3) continuing, as in the past, progress reports in such negotiations—including that any recommendations for action would be made at each subsequent meeting of the UCBWM Corporate Members and Board of Directors.

"Rejoicing in Transformation!" is the theme for the UCBWM Annual Meeting to be held November 14-17, 1997, in Glorieta, New Mexico.

Tutu: cancel debt

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said the moral struggle of churches today should be to work toward canceling the crippling burden of foreign debt on third world countries. He said at the heart of the matter is the jubilee principle—"this biblical thing that says everything belongs to God."

Speaking at the 50th anniversary celebration of Church World Service, Tutu proposed a six-month moratorium on debt repayment followed by debt forgiveness for countries that meet criteria on democratization, human rights and demilitarization, and that use those savings for programs for people.

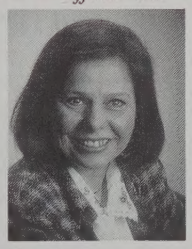
How We See It From Here

*The **Rev. Lee Ching Chee,** one of six overseas partners who sits on the Common Global Ministries Board, is Associate General Secretary of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China and is the first ordained woman both in that denomination and in Hong Kong. In a presentation at the CGMB's April meeting, she offered the following in response to a question about how Hong Kong citizens feel about the impending turnover of Hong Kong from Great Britain to China as of July 1.*

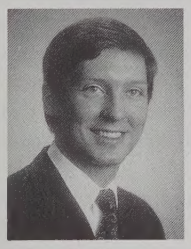
Ever since 1984, the people realized it is a reality we have to accept. Some of us felt not too sad because, naturally, we don't want to be a colony all the time. It is like a child being under the care of a foster parent who gives the child lots of freedom and now she is going to return to her natural mother. But the child realizes the natural mother will be very strict, and has a very bad record of child abuse and is, perhaps, insane. So people feel very uneasy. It is a love-hate relationship. Ninety-seven percent are Chinese, and yet we don't want to lose our freedom. So on the one hand they are very happy, and on the other they begin to worry whether it will be a re-colonization.

There are four types of people in Hong Kong. The business people are very happy and wealthy and will do big business with China. Another type shows no confidence. They are showing it with their feet, because they run away. About 500,000 people have already left, mainly the upper middle class who can afford to leave. And one of every four pastors has left. The third type, the majority, can't leave or can't afford to leave. So they are just looking for an opportunity to make money. They don't think of 1997 at all. The last group are people who couldn't or wouldn't go away. They would like to see (Hong Kong) become a free place, and they will fight for human rights and freedoms.

***Lisa and Steven Smith** serve in a ministry of solidarity and reconciliation in Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, where they live one block from the border crossing at the Oder River to Poland. Before 1989, the area was the East German gathering and distribution center for the Soviet Army, as well as one of the largest Stasi (East German secret police) centers in East Germany. Some things exacerbating the problems in this area are unemployment reaching 20% and the fact that Slubice—located just across the river—is actually an impoverished city where many people feel a sense of desperation, and where the crime rate is very high. Despite such problems the Smiths have been charged by their parish with developing the 20- to 35-year-old age group in Frankfurt/Oder, where only 20% of the population claims any church affiliation.*



Lisa Smith



Steven Smith

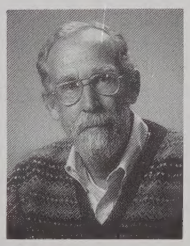
In this age group there are over 600 members—most of which hardly ever attend (church). We have, in discussion with the pastors, selected quite a number of them and have been visiting them at home, hoping to gain their trust and build at least two new groups. We have been so positively responded to—it is truly a blessing! It seems as though they have been waiting for someone to come around and tell them they are needed.

Boy are they needed! The situation right now in the Berlin/Brandenburg regional church is very difficult. They are in the unique situation of being the *only* regional church which had both an East and a West church structure. After the union (of the East and West Germanies) they didn't totally restructure everything right away, so they were administratively top heavy. They must now restructure and are facing a very painful process.

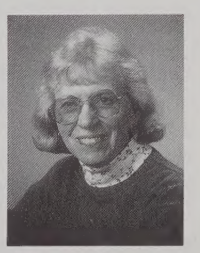
It is not only for that reason that they are facing a crisis in the church. Because of the *effect of 52 years of state atheism,* the church in the East has a much smaller percentage of population in the church than in the West. Because of the economic problems, the church in the East has a much smaller percentage of people (who can) pay the church taxes. Next to the state, the church is the second-largest employer, and for the first time in history it has to make massive layoffs. That does not help the reputation of the church either. This is a very delicate and painful time. They are on the verge of the unknown. We remind ourselves that it is **not** unknown to God, and if we are courageous enough this situation could rise from the tomb of confusion and darkness and open up to opportunities for each church member to become the part of Christ's body that walks into the bright light of faith in a living God!

***Bob and Nelda Thelin** serve in South Africa, where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's deadline for receiving applications for amnesty from apartheid-related crimes just passed.*

By deadline close to 8,000 applications had been received, many from political leaders. One wonders how all can be processed by the time the Commission's work draws to a close at the end of this year. There has been some debate around the question of whether or not amnesty strengthens a culture of lawlessness. If one is granted amnesty for committing a criminal offense, does this send a message that in fact crime does pay?



Bob Thelin



Nelda Thelin

Amnesty is granted to those whose actions resulted in the violation of human rights if it can be proved they acted out of political rather than racial or criminal motives. It is instructive to realize that, thus far, some 36 people have been granted amnesty, and 785 cases have been rejected.

Pulpit exchange inquiries invited

Global Ministries is seeking ordained pastors of congregations who are interested in exchanging pulpits with pastors from the Reformed Church of France. Exchanges will require fluency in the two languages, and are scheduled to begin in September 1998, and will require a full year commitment.

For further details contact Kenneth Ziebell at the Europe Office, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115, 212/870-2712, or Terry Provance, World Ministries in the U.S. Office, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115, 216/736-3210.

Call CWS Hotline 1-800/456-1310 for disaster response activities.

Issue Perspective: Hong Kong's

As the giant digital clock in Tiananmen Square counts down the days, hours and minutes remaining before Hong Kong is rejoined to mainland China on July 1, 1997, the anxiety level of many Hong Kong citizens is gradually increasing. This has intensified as Beijing-appointed representatives have begun cutting back on citizens' rights guaranteed under their Bill of Rights.

In January, a Chinese legal group recommended that 25 laws dealing with civil liberties contained in Hong Kong's Bill of Rights be annulled. Recently, a Beijing-appointed Hong Kong provisional legislature began operating in the shadows of the democratically elected Legislative Council which it will soon replace. This "shadow legislature" has been busy since March rewriting some of the Bill of Rights' statutes, returning them to the more draconian colonial regulations Great Britain had liberalized in 1991.

These new statutes await Hong Kong's reversion to China before they can become law. When they do, they will end the Hong Kong people's right to demonstrate or form organizations without first securing government approval. The ability of international watchdog groups to monitor future elections will also be restricted.

Autonomy "unmatched"

Hong Kong's new chief executive-designate, Tung Chee-Hwa, has given these revisions his blessing, stating, "The security and well being of the community should supersede the rights of individuals." However, China's Foreign Minister and Vice Premier Qian Qichen (pronounced Chen Chee-chen), recently said, "The democratic freedoms and human rights enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong will be more extensive" than under British rule. Qian claimed that Hong Kong would have autonomy "unmatched in the world."

According to the Joint Agreement signed by Great Britain and China in 1984, Hong Kong was guaranteed "a high degree of autonomy" for 50 years after the turnover. The former colony was to become the cornerstone of Deng Xiaoping's vision of "One Country, Two Systems," and was promised an independent judiciary and a chief executive and legislature who were Hong Kong citizens. The people of Hong Kong could also maintain their unique, freewheeling capitalist lifestyle. It would become a Special Administrative Region governed by the Basic Law, Hong Kong's post 1997 mini-constitution. Deng hoped Hong Kong would become the model for the peaceful assimilation of other areas at one time or another considered "an integral part of China."

News of the Joint Agreement had originally been greeted with cautious optimism among Hong Kong's citizens. "After all," the Rev. Lee Ching Chee of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China recalled recently, "for so many years we had been ruled from the outside. After 1997 we would be governed by Hong Kong Chinese, like ourselves."

Getting nervous

But many people of Hong Kong are no longer so confident. "China has intruded more and more into Hong Kong matters and we are getting nervous," Lee noted. (See additional related comments from Lee in the "How We See It From Here" article, page 5.)

For much of Hong Kong's 156-year colonial history, the "pearl of the orient" had been governed with typical colonial paternalism from London. British governors ran the crown colony with small armies of English bureaucrats who had little regard for the wishes of most of Hong Kong's Chinese citizens. The British governor even appointed all the representatives of the colony's Legislative Council, known as Legco.

It was only after the historic Joint Agreement was signed that London began taking steps to allow Hong Kong a more democratic form of government. Indirect elections of some seats on Legco only began in 1985, and direct elections of some representatives in 1991.

Significant factors in the drama

In a very real sense, Great Britain's colonial legacy, its failure to grant Hong Kong more democracy decades ago, and its desire to make a "graceful exit" have played a significant role in the present drama.

Great Britain's belated moves toward Hong Kong democratization accelerated following the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing in 1989. The revisions Chris Patten (Hong Kong's last colonial governor) made to the Bill of Rights in 1991 allowed people to form new social and political organizations and hold mass public demonstrations without first securing permission from the authorities. And in 1995 the entire 60-seat Legco was elected by popular vote.

Beijing authorities protested that Great Britain's granting Hong Kong greater political freedoms violated the Joint Agreement and the Basic Law. Patten denied the charges and countered by accusing the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) of reneging on the spirit of their promise of a high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong.

The 1995 Legco elections proved a pivotal moment in Hong Kong/China relations. Beijing was embarrassed and infuriated when the Democratic Party, under the leadership of Martin Lee, won the most seats. By contrast, most pro-China candidates did not fare well despite being bankrolled by Beijing. Following the election the PRC announced it would replace Legco with an appointed provisional legislature following the July 1 turnover to serve until the 1998 elections.

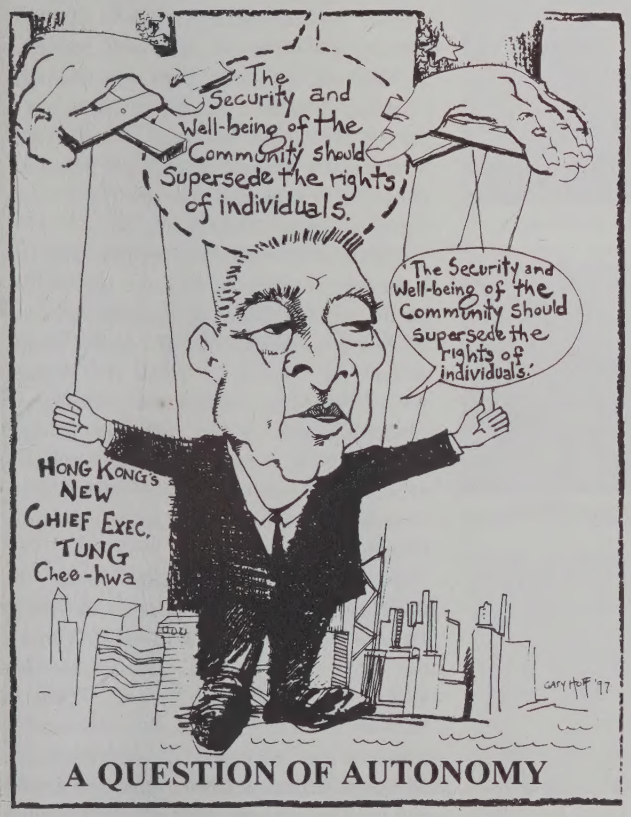
"Among those chosen...were pro-Beijing candidates who had lost in 1995."

In December 1996, the 400-person Selection Committee appointed by Beijing to choose the new chief executive elected shipping magnate Tung Chee Hwa from a field of three Beijing-approved candidates. The committee then proceeded to choose a new legislature to replace Legco. Among those chosen for the new provisional legislature were pro-Beijing candidates who had lost in 1995. Despite protests from Great Britain that the body had no mandate to choose a new legislature, these provisional legislators began meeting and undoing British reforms.

Tung's own "high degree of autonomy" from Chinese influence has been brought into question. Several months before Tung's election China's President Jiang Zemin, visiting Hong Kong, singled out Tung in a crowd for a hardy handshake—a significant incident draped in Chinese symbolism. It is also commonly rumored that Tung's shipping company was rescued from the brink of bankruptcy in 1988 by a fortuitous loan of $120 million from the PRC.

While the new chief executive-designate has so far shown little inclination to oppose Beijing's dictates, Tung has been critical of Hong Kong legislators who go abroad to "bad mouth" Hong Kong and to "mislead the international community." One of his targets has

Future In The Hands Of China



Cartoon by Gary Hoff, copyright 1997

been Martin Lee. Tung questioned the patriotism of the Democratic Party leader and his supporters, suggesting they are "anti-China." Lee, who happened to be on a tour of Europe and the U.S. when Tung made his remarks, recently met Vice President Gore in Washington. President Clinton "dropped by" during the meeting—a significant incident cloaked in Washington symbolism.

Emily Lau, a former journalist for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and now a liberal member of Legco, said Tung's statements show he is just as intolerant of dissenting views as China. "(His threats) should also dispel any remaining illusions harbored by. . .the Clinton Administration and members of Congress," she said.

Record uninspiring

Reaction in Hong Kong's religious communities to the pending turnover to China is mixed. Religious freedom is guaranteed in the Basic Law. But Beijing's record of persecution of Tibetan Buddhists, Muslims in East Turkistan, unregistered Taoists, underground Catholics and certain fundamentalist Protestant sects cannot inspire much confidence. Some, however, seem content to await whatever the future holds.

"China has promised to rule according to the Basic Law," explained a Hong Kong Buddhist leader. "But we cannot predict what will happen. We're all responsible for Hong Kong's prosperity and survival. If we all do our part we'll be fine."

Christians are a distinct minority in Hong Kong, but many of the colony's social services have traditionally been an outreach of the Roman Catholic and Protestant communities (Hong Kong has only a very limited government-run social welfare system). Some politically and socially active church leaders like the Rev. Kwok Nai Wang, director of the Hong Kong Christian Institute, have been highly critical of Beijing's intrusion into Hong Kong's affairs. "Religious freedom also means fighting for social justice," Kwok said recently. "To speak up when there is a public policy that does not look after people. That being the case, (the future of) religious freedom does not look too good."

"...(the future of) religious freedom does not look too good."

China has also pressed mainstream Hong Kong church organizations to participate in the turnover. Last year the Hong Kong Christian Council, an ecumenical umbrella group of 20 denominations representing 100,000 Protestants and the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, were "strongly encouraged" to name representatives to the Selection Committee that chose the new post-1997 chief executive and provisional legislature. This created a dilemma for them. Many viewed the appointment of the provisional legislature to replace the democratically elected Legco a violation of the Basic Law and an illegal act. They wanted nothing to do with it. But they also didn't want to be viewed by Beijing as "obstructionists." Eventually, both the HKCC and the Catholic Diocese sent representatives to participate in the selection process. This pressure from Beijing added to the growing sense of concern as the countdown to July 1 rapidly approaches.

Gary Hoff, Program Associate
Global Ministries' Asia and Pacific Office

Action suggestions . . .

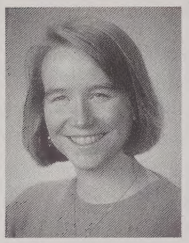
* Day of Prayer — The Hong Kong Christian Council has called on international partner churches to pray for Hong Kong during this time of transition. In response, the Common Global Ministries Board has passed a resolution declaring Sunday June 29 a Day of Prayer for the people and churches of Hong Kong. A special litany will be read and other activities may be scheduled by participating local UCC and Disciples congregations. For a copy of the litany contact the Asia and Pacific Office at the address below.

* For more information — Contact the CGMB's Asia and Pacific Office executive Ching-fen Hsiao at 212/870-2509, email <hsiaoc@ucc.org>, or write to 475 Riverside Drive, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115-0109.

Urban violence

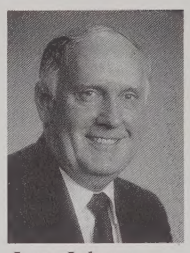
Future plans for the World Council of Churches' Program Unit III (Justice, Peace, Creation) include a program on urban violence. It will focus on violence in seven major urban centers worldwide, including Kansas City in the United States.

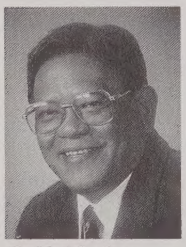
Overseas appointments *(continued from page 1)*

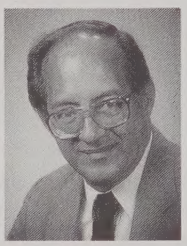

Lori Hayes

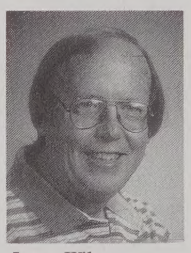
Patricia Casteel

Betsy Lehman

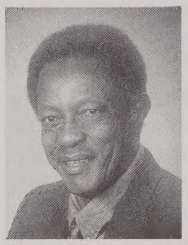

James Lehman


Buddy Martinez


Jorge Bardeguez

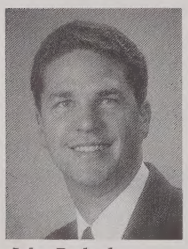

James Wilson

Jayanthi Wilson

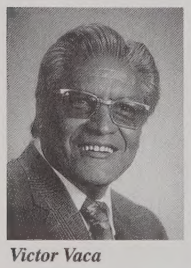

Daniel Gourdet

Sandra Gourdet

Carmen Samuels


John Rodenberg

T. Rodenberg


Victor Vaca

Violet Vaca

microcosm of students from various backgrounds in an effort to build world community with an international background in a country that itself was plural cultures. "The Knolls will enable a different microcosm—helping students experience outreach so they will develop understanding not only of plural cultures, but of society."

Larry and Tim Colvin will spend three years as theological tutors at Kgologano College's theological education by extension program in Botswana, beginning Sept. 1. Tim said she looks forward to sharing her religious education gifts as a teacher and to exploring "how God is experienced" in African culture. If the U.S. church is to grow, Larry said, "it is going to have to hear theologies from other parts of the world."

Larry is a member of Arlington Heights Christian Church and Tim of Downey Avenue Christian Church, both in Indianapolis.

Lori Hayes will teach art education at Rawdat El-Zuhur School in Jerusalem. The school was founded to educate Palestinian orphans, and is affiliated with a local Palestinian NGO and with the UCBWM's Child Sponsorship Program.

Lori said the school was originally for orphan girls found on the streets who were suffering from venereal diseases, but in recent years it has become coeducational. She has tried to prepare for the realities of life in Israel-Palestine, and said she is aware of the personal safety risks involved. She will serve as a Global Mission Intern for one year beginning Aug. 1. Lori is a member of First Church in Wenham, UCC, Wenham, MA.

Patricia Casteel, a retired secondary special education teacher and vocational coordinator and more recently volunteer teacher for elementary children in New Mexico, will serve two years as a volunteer in Thailand beginning Sept. 1. She will teach English at a school related to the Church of Christ in Thailand. While in New Mexico, she worked among the Apaches. Patricia is a member of the East Side Christian Church, Evansville, IN.

Salvador ("Buddy") Martinez, who led a theological reflection on Luke 10:25-37 at the meeting, left June 1 on reappointment for another two years in Thailand at the invitation of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). A Filipino and member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, he will continue as an International Associate and professor of theology with the Payap University McGilvary Theological Faculty in Chiang Mai.

In addition to teaching, Buddy is involved with health projects of the CCT, especially people living with AIDS. During the Bible study he told of a 26-year-old, HIV+ Thai woman who was shunned because she had divorced and remarried a man who had died of AIDS. She was receiving support from a CCT church team who had paid for his cremation, and had continued to support the widow. Buddy told how the woman had risen at 4:30 a.m. and walked five miles to get food to prepare for the team's lunch, and how she remarked during the meal that she was "not sad that my husband died or that I am living with HIV, because I never would have known what it means to be loved."

Daniel and Sandra Gourdet, who served as Disciples missionaries in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) for many years until being reassigned to Zimbabwe in 1993, were reappointed under the CGMB for three more years with the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. Daniel will consult in development work and Sandra in educational and women's work. They are members of the Macedonia Christian Church in Birmingham, AL.

John and Tamara Rodenberg will return to Swaziland July 1 at the invitation of the Christian Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion of Swaziland. John is a projects development consultant and Tamara a theological educator. They are members of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Bowling Green, KY.

(see next page)

Appointments

(continued from page 8)

Jorge Bardeguez was invited by the Christian Mission of Nicaragua to return and work for three more years with the church's theological education program. He is assigned to teach at the Ecumenical Evangelical Theological Faculty, to design and coordinate a theological education program for the Mission's laity, and to lead a research project on the history of the Mission.

A native of Puerto Rico, Jorge is a member of the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico, UCC.

Carmen Samuels, a public health and clinical nurse and nurse educator, returned to Lesotho May 1 to serve an additional year as a volunteer health education consultant. She was invited by the Christian Health Association of Lesotho to work at St. Joseph's School of Nursing at Roma Hospital. Carmen is a member of Christian Fellowship Congregational Church, UCC, in San Diego, CA.

James and Elizabeth Lehman will return Aug. 1 to Woodstock School, Mussoorie, India, for two more years. Jim will serve as director of counseling and Elizabeth as a public health consultant with the Christian Medical Association of India and other related organizations. The Lehmans belong to the First Reformed Church, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

Victor and Violet Vaca were reappointed to serve three more years in Ecuador with the Ecumenical Foundation for Integral Development, Training and Education (FEDICE). Victor is the national advisor for FEDICE's pastoral and development programs. Violet coordinates the women's pastoral ministry program. The Vacas are members of El Salvador Covenant Church, Quito, Ecuador.

James and Jayanthi Wilson were invited by the Lesotho Evangelical Church to serve three more years in that country. James is a religious education instructor at the National Teachers Training College of Lesotho. Jayanthi will be a librarian/tutor at SOS Children's Village, Masianokeng, when they return.

Suzanne Stanfield, a member of Harvard Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tulsa, OK, was appointed as a volunteer for six months through Oct. 31 to work with the Synodical Board of Health Services, Church of North India, as a health educator.

NEW RESOURCES: Brazil, Christians in violent society; uprooted; travel

From Friendship Press ...

"We have built ourselves up by burning millions of Indians. Later we burned millions of blacks. Now we are burning millions of mestizos in their production of things to bring profits to the business sector, not of things they themselves consume." — D. Ribeiro, *O Brasil como problema.*

This arresting quote printed in *Brazil: A Gracious People in a Heartless System,* the new 1997-98 Friendship Press study resource by Zwinglio Dias and Joyce Hill, points out that behind the glitter of Copacabana and Ipanema the largest nation in South America is a nation of pain and suffering. The book introduces the people of

Brazil and the economic system in which they find themselves trapped.

There are introductions to Brazil's history, the role of missions in the development of the culture, economic and social factors that have led to great wealth and extreme poverty side by side, and signs of hope for the future. The accompanying study guide, structured for six, four or one session, includes Brazilian worship resources, music resources, recipes and more. Accompanying resources are a Map 'n' Facts and a 26-minute video, *A Faithful Response,* detailing the involvement of three Protestant denominations in the slums of Rio de Janeiro.

Also part of the 1997-98 study is *A Call to Hope, Living as Christians in a Violent Society,* which takes a realistic look at the violence of the world around us—with specific suggestions on ways to live in hope and love, to confront violence and refuse to allow it the last word.

Also available is a children's magazine by the same name with a teacher's guide. A 28-minute video, *Christian Faith in a Violent World,* which deals with domestic violence, violence against children, crime and violence in the media, is also available, with a complimentary study guide.

From the WCC ...

Churches worldwide are commemorating 1997 as the Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity With Uprooted People. The World Council of Churches' *Statement on Uprooted People* says churches are "challenged as never before to make a choice: will they choose to be the church of the stranger and take the side of the uprooted, or will they choose to turn away or ignore the problem?"

A packet which includes the WCC statement, brochure and poster on 1997 as the year of solidarity, a bulletin insert, a resource kit including liturgy and Bible study materials is available from the UCBWM Refugee Resettlement Office, 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115, 212/870-3369.

Travel workbook ...

People, Places and Partnerships, A Workbook for Your Mission Trip Abroad, is available for $2 postpaid from the Global Ministries' World Ministries in the U.S. and Canada Office, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115, 212/870-3212. In 40+ pages it offers sections on reflecting, preparation, sharing/helping/gift-giving, remembering and telling the story, and back home follow-up.

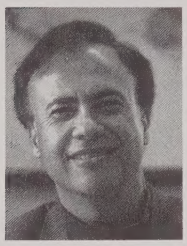
Burned churches ...

"We continue to pray with you and for you that God should empower the Church in America to do even more exceedingly well not only in rebuilding the broken, burnt down walls, but also in rebuilding the walls of acceptance and love of all God's creation in its diversities."

This quote from our ecumenical partner the Christian Council of Lesotho is typical of the response to African-American church burnings in the U.S. south that poured in from African partners after the Global Ministries Africa Office appealed for prayers, material support and advice. Excerpts and details of the response, a useful tool toward racial reconciliation, are compiled in the brochure *Africa and the Burned Churches.* Copies are available from the Africa Office, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206, 317/635-3100.

Central Rembao: a new form of mission relationship

By Daniel Romero, General Secretary, Mission Program



"When the missionaries were present in Mexico, we related through them to the Christians in the United States," declared a pastor of the Mexican Congregational Church in Tepic. "After the missionaries left we felt isolated; however, now we can relate directly to Christians in the United States through Centro Rembao." The Rev. Saul Zambrano made this hopeful observation at a recent board meeting of the newly established Centro Alberto Rembao (CAR). CAR is providing a new avenue for dialogue and interaction among Christians on both sides of the Mexican-U.S. border. At the heart of this new endeavor is the creation of a setting where critical issues affecting the large majority of persons of Latin descent in the west can be discussed with brothers and sisters across the border from a progressive theological perspective.

The Congregational Christian movement dates back to 1872 when the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent two young missionaries to Guadalajara, Jalisco. Ten years later there were 10 newly formed Congregational churches, some of which later followed their missionary leader out of the Congregational fellowship. However, the mission in Mexico was reorganized and even provided the impetus to begin establishing local churches in southern California in 1896. In 1914, mainline Protestant denominations divided Mexico into various "colonies," assigning certain Mexican states to U.S. church bodies. The Congregational Church wound up with the western Mexican states. Today there are approximately 11 Congregational Churches in Mexico.

Alberto Rembao, born in 1895, emerged as a leading theologian in Latin America and was the first director of the Colegio Internacional in Guadalajara. Educated in three U.S. universities and at Pacific School of Religion, he soon began editing the publication *Nueva Democracia,* which carried the works of many well-known Mexican and Latin American writers, artists and theologians. Rembao was a "contextual" theologian before contextualization was an ecumenical buzzword. He followed closely the social and economic forces that were critical to responses of the faith community. He was keenly aware of the shift that needed to take place from the "mother" churches to the newly independent churches and the importance of the development of leadership and of a body of thought that represented people of faith "in each place." He had a very progressive and expansive view of God's mission in the world.

It is a tragedy that many Latino/a theological students have never heard of Alberto Rembao. Theological education and reflection in many U.S. mainline seminaries (until more recent years) failed to incorporate into their curricula works of non-European scholars. Today there is far more consciousness that there exists a body of work from the two-thirds world that challenges a monolithic view of God's world. We welcome this new spirit and energy. Recognizing the need for this new perspective of Latino thought and culture by and for Latinos, the Western Hispanic Ministries Strategy Team and the UCC Council for Hispanic Ministries of the Pacific joined together with the Mexican Congregational Church to establish the Centro Alberto Rembao.

CAR will be dedicated to continuing a global progressive theological agenda which Rembao lived and about which he wrote. It will be an agenda shaped primarily by Mexican constituency that resides on both sides of the border. The Mexican people themselves represent a mixed race people which makes it possible for Mexicans to relate to a wide range of experience and to respond with profound respect to a growing diversity of cultures, thoughts and ideas. CAR will be dedicated to creating a place where the interchange of ideas and encounter of cultures will move us toward conversion and transformation. Conversion takes place wherever the spirit of God moves to transform humanity. Conversion is not only an isolated spiritual moment but is inextricably linked to the creation of community.

More importantly, the Center represents a new moment in mission history. For almost two hundred years, mission relationships were established, maintained and nurtured by historic institutions with specific mission understandings and mandates. Today, those historic mission institutions are joining with other constituencies to develop new forms of mission relationships. CAR is one example where UCBWM/DOM's common ministry in Latin America and the Caribbean has embraced and supported this direct relationship between Latino/as in the United States and the Mexican Congregational Church. The Guiding Principles of the Common Global Ministries Board call for a "shared life in Jesus Christ". . .a sharing that is mutual, reciprocal and faithful to Christ's call for peace and justice. CAR has accepted this new covenant with the CGMB and welcomes the opportunity to learn and grow as this new reality takes shape.

CAR has sponsored two major gatherings, 1995 in Guadalajara and most recently (February 1997) in Claremont, California. Major focus has been given to understanding the complexity of the Mexican-U.S. reality. The border we share is in many respects invisible. It does not exist in the world of economics, politics or culture. The border has created an artificial division among people who live in much the same context. "The fences must come down," wrote a participant. Christians who share a common vision of oneness will have difficulty accepting a separation of God's people who continue to live in such disparity side by side. There are no easy answers, but Centro Alberto Rembao will respond to God's continuing call for justice and will support acts of solidarity that destroy fences and build community.

At the urging of Rembao lectureship participants, a letter from UCC President Paul Sherry and the Rev. Daniel Celis Arceo, president of the Congregational Christian Church of Mexico, was sent to U.S. President Bill Clinton and Mexico's President Ernesto Zedillo prior to their May meeting in Mexico. Among other things, it cited the failure of NAFTA and developments in the globalization of industry, agriculture and production to take into account the characteristics and necessities of each country and its regions.

Trips offered

The Plowshares Institute is offering travel seminars to Brazil and Indonesia in 1998. The Brazil trip will be Jan. 6-19, and is focused on "Reconciliation and the Quest for Sustainable Development." Participants will explore ecological issues, examine implications of U.S. foreign policy, observe the role of the church, and look at sustainable development approaches and effective means of education at home. Application deadline is Nov. 1, 1997. Contact Plowshares at P.O. Box 243, Simsbury, CT, 06070, 860/651-4304.

The Indonesia trip is Aug. 10-23.

Mills members honored

Three new names were added to the membership rolls of the Samuel J. Mills Society recently. They are Marie B. Kesting, of Immanuel UCC in Ferguson, MO, and Rachel and Richard Wolff, members of First Congregational Church, Elyria, OH.

Kesting with Mills award

The Society was established in 1981 to honor persons who have made significant contributions to the work of the UCBWM. The year 1981 was the 175th anniversary of the historic Haystack Prayer Meeting when five young men including Mills, the leader of the group, pledged their lives to Christian mission overseas. This set in motion what would become the first mission sending agency in the U.S.—the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Other members are as follows—Judith and Paul Aylward Jr., Christopher Ballou, Arthur Barnes, Herbert and Kei Beecken, Corrine and Donald Bergmann, Lois and Richard Bertini, Edith Bowles, Gertrude and Richard Braun, Katherine Buell,, George Burridge, Eva and Fred Christian, Henry Clark Jr., Stanley Dole, Ron and Jeanne Fujiyoshi.

Linda and Millard Fuller, Otis and Alice Cary, Annabeth and William Gay, Helen Goetz, George Hauschildt, Richard Hayes, Ruth Henderson, Irma and Robert Howbrigg, Helen Ingham, Ruth Jackson, Betty and Paul Keene, Florence Keuerleber, Martha and Richard Lammers, Haru and James Landes, John Lepke, James Lester, Betsey and Shelby Light, Charles and Clara Linke.

Also Lorne MacLean, Helen and Frederick Martin, Helen and Frederick Munson, Raymond Olson, Walter Olsen, David Rasche, Barbara and William Rugg, Lois and Paul Schnake, Carl Schweitzer, Elizabeth Stamp, David and Virginia Stowe, Lois Sundeen, Frank Teagle, Charlotte Webb, Wilda Weiss, Judith Welles, Barbara West, Winifred Weter, Holly and John Whitcomb, Barbara and John Wilson.

LACING UP! — Ukrainian boys scramble to find the right fit! Well over 1,000 pairs of shoes were donated to help youngsters in the Ukraine, where the economic situation is dire. Our UCC partner, The Reformed Church of Transcarpathia, distributed the footwear to local church pastors who then shared them with both the churched and unchurched in their communities. Shoes also went to struggling theological students from the Ukraine studying in Hungary. While the Global Sharing of Resources Office cannot send personal thanks to the many local congregations who supported the "Little Shoes To Fill" program, it was reported that the love gifts were deeply appreciated. *(Staff photo by Linda Petrucelli)*

Chronicle

RETIREMENTS

Audrey Gilg, Japan, as of 3/31/97 (34 years).

John Huegel, Mexico, as of 11/30/96 (42 years).

Evelyn Kroehler, Japan, as of 11/30/96 (47 years).

James Landes, Japan, as of 3/31/97 (31 years).

LOSSES TO THE FAMILY

Mary Moore Heineman, 81, died May 14, 1997, in Waverly, TN. She had served 30 years in India with her husband Charles, and before that served six years with the Methodist Church, also in India. The Heinemans served at the Madura Mission. She founded a ministry for destitute persons called "Friendship House," and was active in helping hundreds of the poorest residents and migrants of the town. She is survived by her husband and four children.

Charlotte B. Reid, who served three years in Turkey and South Africa, and 13 years as homebased staff (including director of the UCBWM personnel office) died Feb. 7, 1997, at the age of 74 in Jacksonville Beach, FL. While overseas she taught at the Uskudar American Academy in Turkey and served as principal at Inanda Seminary in South Africa. She is survived by a sister, Susan Galt, of Atlantic Beach, FL.

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF

DOROTHY APPLEBY
Nigel M. Cox

BUD SCUDDER
Myrbeth W. Culver

STEPHANIE COOK
First Congregational Church

DALITA GOBA
Carol C. Gilley

CETWAYO GOBA
Carol C. Gilley

JOHN REULING
Lawrence Gilley

ERWIN RICHARDS
Lawrence Gilley

ALAN & MARY TAYLOR
Lawrence Gilley

ELSIE SCHOMER
David Stowe

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Women and micro-credit: a developing phenomenon

By C. Alicia Nebot, Program Associate
Global Education & Advocacy

Luisa Amanda Espinoza used to sell homemade tortillas to passengers on the rickety busses that connect rural villages and towns in Nicaragua, the poorest country in Central America. Then, with a loan from the grass roots women's bank, she expanded her business—buying corn for her tortillas in bulk, and hiring other young women to sell them on the busses. Today, Luisa not only supports her family on her earnings but invests some of her profits in the women's bank so other young women without collateral can get start-up loans too.

The UCC's One Great Hour of Sharing partner in Nicaragua, the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEPAD) provided the original capital that enabled the women's bank to begin its small loan programs.

The idea of a micro-credit summit first emerged at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, during a panel on micro-credit moderated by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Among the panelists were a handful of visionaries—including Ela Bhatt, founder of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, and Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

Yunus, considered the inventor of micro-credit, started the Grameen (Village) Bank in 1975 by lending $27 to 42 poor people in Bangladesh. One of the most poignant stories he shared was about a beggar to whom he lent 65 cents, which enabled her to buy the raw material to make bookmarks. When she knocked on the door of a lady from whom she regularly begged, the beggar lady announced, "Today I'm not here to beg, I'm here to sell." Today Grameen services more than two million borrowers, with over $1 billion lent and $18 million in savings generated.

> ". . .no conventional bank will lend them the small amount requested due to the meager return."

Ms. Bhatt shared how SEWA's first micro-loan in 1975 was for $1.50 to a poor woman who bought herbs which she then sold for a profit to buy food for the night. Women (among the poorest of the poor in the world) are the main beneficiaries from this type of loan. They have no other access to credit—either because they have no collateral or because no conventional bank will lend them the small amount requested due to the meager return. Another example of success is Chanda Jagaria, a self-employed clothes vendor who has proven herself credit-worthy with SEWA. "I was thrown out of the main banks, but today I'm taking care of myself and paying back everything I borrowed."

Micro-loans average $150, but loans of $10 to $50 are not uncommon. That such small amounts of money can actually make a difference in human life underscores the tremendous gap between the rich and the poor despite record economic growth in some parts of the world.

In February this year more than 2,000 practitioners of micro-credit gathered in Washington, D.C., for a Micro-Credit Summit with one goal in mind: "to reach one million people of the world's poorest families, with credit for self-employment and other financial and business services, by the year 2005."

One of the main questions remaining is for governments and private sectors. Would they complement the success of micro-credit with deeper investments in social infrastructures? What about schools, roads, health care, drinkable water viable civic institutions and all the other elements that will truly reduce poverty? Will the micro-credit borrowers be left stranded on plateaus. . .loans paid back, but unable to move forward? The answers remain to be seen.

Nebot carries the UCBWM portfolio for United Nations issues. She is based in New York.

Luisa Espinoza's story, one among many which shows how the church does development work, will appear as a One Great Hour of Sharing bulletin insert in 1998. In more than 100 countries, including the U.S. and Canada, gifts to OGHS enable organizations such as CEPAD to assist in God's work of transforming lives—one at a time.